

M I D D L E E A S T A N D S O U T H A S I A R E V I E W

18 May 1981

Lebanese Crisis

Military Situation--Jerusalem radio reported that a Syrian SAM missile accidentally downed a Syrian MIG on 14 May, but a Syrian military spokesman, cited by Damascus radio on 16 May, denied the Israeli claim. Voice of Lebanon radio reported that Syrian MiG's strafed Phalangist positions in the Sannin area on 16 May, although monitored Syrian media have not confirmed this. Heavy shelling broke out in Beirut over the weekend, according to radio reports. Voice of Lebanon said Syrian and Palestinian artillery shelled eastern Beirut continuously early on 17 May while clandestine Voice of Palestine accused the Phalangists of shelling populated areas in western Beirut on the same day. Although Beirut radio reported a lull in the fighting later in the day, it said the clashes continued and intensified on 18 May. Further Beirut radio reports said today's clashes along the contact lines have abated but revealed that 25 people were killed and 118 wounded in the recent bout of fighting.

According to Voice of Lebanon, fighting continued around Zahlah over the weekend, with Syrian shelling of the city and attacks on Phalangist positions. Voice of Palestine reported on 18 May that clashes are continuing on the 'Uyun as-Siman front between Arab Deterrent Forces (ADF) and the Phalangists. The radio also reported renewed Israeli-Christian militia shelling of Palestinian positions in the southern regions of Arnun, Al-Qal'ah and An-Nabatiyah on 17 May and said IDF units have been concentrating in the eastern sector of the border strip and along the northern borders of Israel. Jerusalem radio, citing the UN spokesman in southern Lebanon, reported that Israeli gunboats exchanged fire with Palestinian forces in the Ar-Rashidiyah area late last night.

Comments on Naval Movements--A 16 May Damascus radio report on the movement of U.S. aircraft carriers Independence and Forrestal into the eastern Mediterranean described their presence in the region as "provocations." Jerusalem radio reported on 17 May that the U.S. force was close to the Lebanese coast while the Soviet task force in the eastern Mediterranean was moving west between Cyprus and Crete.

Habib Mission--SPA reported that U.S. Special Envoy Philip Habib arrived in Riyadh on 16 May for talks on the Lebanese situation. A Jerusalem TV correspondent said that Habib's visit to Saudi Arabia should be viewed as a U.S. approach to a pro-Western ally and noted that Saudi Arabia's influence on Syria is very great. IDF radio reported yesterday that the Israeli Cabinet decided unanimously to allow Habib to continue his mediation efforts without any time limits.

Saudi Statement, message--A 17 May Saudi Arabian Foreign Ministry statement, carried textually by SPA, denounced Israel's "escalation" of the situation in Lebanon and reaffirmed the kingdom's support for the legitimate authorities and the ADF force there. Noting that Syria's role in the ADF is supported by the legitimate authorities in Lebanon, the statement affirmed Saudi Arabia's determination to support "sister Syria" in the face of any aggression against both it and Lebanon. On the same day, Damascus radio reported that President Hafiz al-Asad received in Damascus Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz at-Tuwayjiri, assistant national guard commander, who conveyed a message to him on the current situation from Saudi King Khalid ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz.

Al-Asad Remarks--Addressing members of the Permanent Secretariat of the African and Asian Writers Union in Damascus, President al-Asad said Syria will resist any attempt by Israel to intervene in Lebanon's affairs and will resist any Israeli aggression. In his remarks, reported by Damascus television, Al-Asad also said Syria's enemies have now resorted to external aggression after the failure of their internal conspiracy involving the Muslim Brotherhood.

Syrian Comment--On 16 May Damascus television cited an official source as saying that the Syrian Government had denied allegations of an implicit agreement with Israel defining red lines in Lebanon that the ADF cannot cross and the kind of weapons to be used in Lebanese territory. According to Damascus radio yesterday, the daily TISHRIN charged that there are no red lines, only imaginary lines that Israel wants. In a commentary on 16 May, the radio said Syria vehemently rejects any Israeli security rights within a Lebanese territorial policy and refuses to discuss the means which its forces in Lebanon are entitled to have and to use. According to the radio's press review the same day, TISHRIN said that the Syrian missiles are an organic part of the military and defensive requirements of any Syrian military unit or presence in Lebanon and that Syria will not lack any of the requisites for a successful confrontation with Israel. A 17 May Damascus radio commentary claimed that an "Arab nationalist resurgence" is rallying round Syria. Denouncing as "slander" a recent statement on Lebanon by former Under Secretary of State Joseph Sisco, the radio warned that Syria is not alone and cannot be attacked in isolation.

Soldatov Comments--After a 16 May meeting in Beirut with Lebanese Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan, Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr Soldatov told journalists that recent developments in Lebanon are "unrelated" to the Soviet-Syrian treaty of friendship and cooperation. In his remarks, reported by Beirut radio, Soldatov also said the Soviet Union supports Syrian steps aimed at stopping the fighting in Lebanon and improving the situation. He said the Soviet fleet is performing its "normal mission" in the eastern Mediterranean.

Junblatt, Baqraduni Interviews--AFP reported that in an interview published today by the Lebanese weekly MONDAY MORNING, Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Junblatt said no ADF withdrawal from Lebanon should be contemplated until a security pact has been worked out between Syria and the Lebanese Army. Interviewed in the same edition of the magazine, Phalangist Political Bureau member Karim Baqraduni called for the progressive withdrawal of the ADF and its replacement by regular Lebanese troops.

Israeli Foreign Minister Interview--Questioned on his hopes for a political solution to the Lebanese crisis, Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said in an interview carried by Jerusalem television that there does not have to be war and that there are military operations short of war which can be used when there is no alternative.

Iranian Envoy, Statements--Damascus radio reported that an Iranian delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Hashemi-Rafsanjani arrived in Damascus on 17 May. The radio said Hashemi-Rafsanjani announced that he had brought a message for President al-Asad from Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad 'Ali Raja'i and declared Iran's solidarity with the Syrian stand on Lebanon. Later, the Iranian envoy met with Syrian Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, the radio reported. Meanwhile, according to a 15 May Tehran radio report, 'Ali Khamene'i, Tehran's Friday imam, predicted that if Israel were to attack Syria, Iraq would not come to Syria's assistance but Iranians would fight alongside their Muslim brothers.

'Arafat Activities--Voice of Palestine radio reported that PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir Arafat returned to Beirut via Damascus on 16 May after a visit to Algeria and Libya. On 17 May he chaired a joint meeting of the PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian command to report on his trip, the radio reported. According to the same source, 'Arafat also met yesterday with Soviet Ambassador Soldatov, who delivered an important message from the Soviet leaders. Voice of Palestine radio reported that later on 17 May 'Arafat chaired a meeting of the Fatah Central Committee, which issued a political statement stressing the importance of an immediate Arab foreign ministers conference to review the Lebanese situation and calling for the mobilization of all Arab resources on the Syrian-Lebanese front.

As-Sadat, Ghali Comments--MENA quoted Egyptian President Anwar as-Sadat as saying that regardless of what happens between Syria and Israel, Camp David is an established fact. According to Cairo radio, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Butrus Ghali said that if the Lebanese Army cannot defend Lebanon, then an international emergency force must be formed for a transitional period until the army can assume responsibility for preserving Lebanon's independence.

Egyptian Radio Comment--A Cairo radio commentary said that Moscow is behind the deployment of missiles in the Al-Biqa' valley because Moscow knew that Israel would not keep silent about this development and could be pushed into confronting Syria. The radio explained that Israel would sustain losses in any strike at the missiles and that Syria would look like a martyr to the Arab world and would rally its support. Moscow and Damascus would then attribute Syria's predicament to Camp David, it added.

Iran-Iraq Conflict

On 15 May Tehran radio reported continuing military activity on the western and southern fronts and said that Abadan and Ahvaz had come under an Iraqi missile and artillery attack. The KHALEEF TIMES of Dubayy carried a REUTER report the same day citing the acting governor of Abadan, who said that the Abadan oil refinery has been destroyed in the fighting and must be abandoned. An Iraqi Armed Forces General Command communique, broadcast by Baghdad radio on 15 May, detailed Iranian losses on various fronts and reported that 21 Iraqis had lost their lives in the fighting.

According to Tehran radio on 16 May, Iranian forces smashed the enemy defense line near Abadan by capturing two strategic hills overlooking the Abadan region. The radio reported 1 enemy infantry battalion was routed, 85 enemy soldiers were captured and 8 tanks were destroyed. It said that attempts are continuing to liberate the remaining sectors of the city. Tehran radio also reported continuing military activity on the southern and western fronts, claimed 100 enemy losses in a clash on the Susangerd axis and said that Ahvaz had again come under artillery fire. An Iraqi Armed Forces General Command communique, carried by Baghdad radio on 16 May, claimed seven Iranians were killed in the Abadan region and admitted Iraqi forces lost six men.

On 17 May Tehran radio reported Iraqi attempts to regain positions in Abadan and said firing on residential areas was continuing. It also reported military activity on the Marivan and Ilam fronts. According to an Iraqi Armed Forces General Command communique, Iranian losses totaled 307 on the Abadan front. The communique said Iraqi forces pounded Iranian positions around Abadan.

Pakistan

According to Karachi radio, a Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman on 14 May rejected a recent Afghan allegation that Pakistan has deviated from its policy of finding a solution to the Afghan situation through political negotiations. The spokesman called these "baseless allegations" a restatement of views expressed in PRAVDA and on Moscow radio a day earlier.

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KARMAL ADDRESSES GHOWR PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVES

LD172352 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari/Pashto 1600 GMT 17 May 81

[Text] Babrak Karmal, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee, chairman of the DRA Revolution Council and DRA prime minister, met this afternoon in a sincere atmosphere with representatives of Ghowr Province workers at Revolution Council headquarters. Babrak Karmal welcomed the representatives on behalf of the party and government, saying: I hope to solve problems with everybody's cooperation and strive forward together toward constructing a progressive and developed society in Afghanistan for the prosperity, well-being and happiness of our once-persecuted people.

In his long speech, which was accompanied by applause and expressions of patriotic feelings from the representatives of the working people of Ghowr Province, Babrak Karmal added: Dear brothers, the inheritance that has been left to us from the dark past is very frightening. The solution of these problems, which have been left by the line of despotic kings, is not the work of a day, a week or a month. Our path is full of problems and full of ups and downs. It is the path of righteousness, of freedom, of justice and prosperity. Reaching the end of this path requires a lot of work and struggle.

Babrak Karmal went on: The Sawr Revolution was accomplished in accordance with the will of the Afghan people, who wanted to eliminate exploitation, cruelty and oppression and to have a prosperous and happy life. We must accept the fact that a generation who accomplishes a revolution does not accomplish it for its own prosperity and well-being but for the prosperity and well-being of the children and future generations of the homeland. Revolutions are for the prosperity of the coming generations. A noble Muslim and a true noble Afghan is (one) who does not work only for himself but works for his children and the present and future generations. We have carried out the revolution. We work and struggle to build a prosperous and flourishing society, to make our future generations prosperous. These are our goals, our slogans, and this is our humanity, our Islam and our Afghanistan. We will sacrifice the last drop of our blood for the prosperity of the present and future generations of Afghanistan. We are completely confident that, with the will and cooperation of our noble people, we will succeed in implementing these humane and sublime goals.

Addressing the audience, Babrak Karmal added: I know the toiling and noble people of Ghowr Province very well; it is the proud Ghowr that was the center of progress and civilization once upon a time. But the dictatorship of the former rulers--in particular, the despotism and tyranny of Hafizollah Amin--over Afghanistan, including Ghowr Province, is unforgettable. I am fully aware of the great hardships, pains and problems of the Ghowr working people and the treacherous actions and savage crimes of the enemies of the Afghan revolution that have been committed in that province. But I assure you that with the kindness of God Almighty and with the cooperation of the noble, courageous and toiling people of Afghanistan, all enemies of the peace and prosperity of the people of Afghanistan will be eliminated and the new and prosperous Afghan society will be built.

A number of the noble people of Ghowr Province also made speeches. Expressing their support for the party and government, they pledged once again to fight until the end of their lives to safeguard the territorial integrity of the fatherland, the national honor and [word indistinct], to defend Afghanistan's freedom and independence and put the values of the revolution into practice. They will eliminate the sworn enemies of the noble people of Afghanistan.

At the end of the meeting, one of the representatives read out the resolutions of the Ghowr working people expressing their support for the revolutionary government. These were warmly applauded by the audience.

FOREIGN MINISTRY PROTESTS INDIAN ACTION AT ISLAND

BK161743 Dacca Domestic Service in English 1705 GMT 16 May 81

[Text] Bangladesh has demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Indian ship (Sambhar) and armed personnel landed by it on South Talpatty Island. A press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Dacca today says the Indian Navy ship with helicopters and some personnel in khaki uniform on board the ship was observed in Bangladesh waters on the 9th of this month. The ship went to South Talpatty Island and landed some of these personnel on the island. It was also found that some huts and tents and [word indistinct] marks and one pole bearing the Indian flag were also erected on the island.

The press release says such an unwarranted and unilateral action on the part of the Indian Government was a clear violation of the agreement reached between the two governments to seek a peaceful solution of the problem at an early date. It was also the violation of Bangladesh territory since the Indian ship was positioned in the estuary of the Raimangal River, an internal river of Bangladesh.

The Government of Bangladesh, therefore, lodged a strong protest with the Indian Government of the 11th of this month and the Government of India was requested to withdraw the ship from the territorial waters of Bangladesh along with its men and material from the island, which had hitherto remained unoccupied.

With a view to justify its illegal actions, the Indian Government, in its reply on the 13th of this month, on the contrary accused the Bangladesh Navy of provocative activities in the area. This accusation was totally baseless since the Bangladesh Navy boats were operating within Bangladesh waters. The Government of India, however, admitted in its reply on the 13th of this month that the Indian Navy ship (Sambhar) was anchored northeast of South Talpatty Island, which it also wrongly claimed to be Indian water.

The press release points out that the northeast of the South Talpatty is the estuary of the Raimangal River, which is an internal river of Bangladesh, and as such the Indian naval ship was actually anchored in Bangladesh waters. In the meanwhile, a second class Indian frigate named INS Andaman joined INS (Sambhar). This clearly tantamounts to a further escalation of the provocative situation. Although India in its note of the 13th of this month reiterated its intention to exchange further data and to hold further discussions based on the understanding reached previously between the foreign ministers of the two countries, there is clearly a contradiction between the declared intentions and the actual action in mounting by India, which amounted to a military operation on the South Talpatty Island and its adjoining areas.

The unfounded allegations that provocation by Bangladesh was evidently put forward by India on repeated Bangladesh requests a cover for her illegal action. The fact is that it is India and not Bangladesh that landed armed personnel on the disputed island and it leaves no room for doubt as to who are responsible for the provocation.

In another note, the Bangladesh Government, pointing out these facts, requested India once again to withdraw the Indian Navy ship from the Bangladesh waters along with men and material, including the Indian flag, from the disputed island and to desist from such unilateral and provocative action in the future.

The Bangladesh Government also requested the Government of India to conduct immediately a joint survey as agreed earlier for resolving this problem peacefully and without further delay in a spirit of understanding, cooperation and good neighborliness in accordance with its commitment.

Spokesman on Island Dispute

BK171644 Dacca Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 17 May 81

[Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has categorically stated in Dacca that the Indian allegations of provocative acts by Bangladesh naval boats near the disputed island of South Talpatty are totally unfounded and are used as a cover for her own unwarranted, unilateral and illegal actions. Asked to comment on the Indian allegations, the spokesman said the baselessness of these allegations is further manifest from the fact that the Indian naval ship (Sambhar) landed personnel and erected structures on the island and its helicopter moved around freely without any obstacles. The Indian contention that provocative acts on the part of the Bangladesh naval boats led her to send a frigate is also, therefore, altogether untenable.

The spokesman said the commitment of Bangladesh to honor the agreement between the two governments for a peaceful settlement of this problem was also demonstrated by the fact that Bangladesh showed great restraint in a highly provocative situation and (?simply resorted) to the diplomatic action of lodging a protest with India on the 11th of this month against her illegal action and requested her to (?take) the men and material from the disputed island and also to remove her naval ship from the area. Bangladesh, he pointed out, waited for the Indian reply, which was dated the 13th of this month, was actually delivered to Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi on the 15th. Since the reply did not contain a positive response to the Bangladesh proposal, and in the meantime a frigate had also joined the ship, Bangladesh sent another note to India once again urging her to withdraw the ship and honor her commitment to the peace settlement of the problem. Simultaneously, a press statement quoting the fact about Indian action was issued. The spokesman further pointed out that if the intention of the Indian Government in sending her naval ship to South Talpatty was to undertake a survey of the area and collect information in connection with the settlement of this problem, the objective would have been best served through a joint survey of India and Bangladesh, as agreed upon between by the two governments. In any event, advance information about the arrival of the ship in the region should have been sent to Bangladesh in order to avoid any misunderstanding between the two neighbors since the ownership of the island was claimed by both and both the countries had also agreed to a peaceful settlement of this problem at the meeting of the two foreign ministers in Dacca in August last year. The spokesman again expressed the hope that a good sense would prevail and the situation would be defused by the withdrawal of Indian men and material from the island and the removal of the Indian naval ship from the area.

Groups Protest Indian Moves

BK180713 Dacca Overseas Service in English 0445 GMT 18 May 81

[Excerpt] Different political parties and organizations have reacted sharply against the violation of Bangladesh territorial waters by the Indian Navy and the landing of their personnel on the South Talpatty Island last week. In separate statements, they expressed their concern at the Indian move and termed the incident as an act of aggression. They urged the government to work out a strategy to foil the Indian design. The parties include the Farakka and Border Aggression Resistance Committee, the United People's Party, the Bangladesh Jatiya Dal, the Krishak Sramik Party, Bangladesh Labor Party, Bangladesh Islamic Party and the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal.

AWAMI LEAGUE PRESIDENT ARRIVES IN DACCA 17 MAY

BK171719 Dacca Domestic Service in English 1705 GMT 17 May 81

[Text] President of Awami League-Hasina Sheikh Hasina Wazed arrived in Dacca this afternoon from Calcutta in an Indian Airlines plane. She was received at Kurnitola International Airport by the party leaders and workers. Later, she addressed a public rally at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

SATHE, BANGLADESH ENVOY DISCUSS GUNBOAT INCIDENT

BK161616 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 16 May 81

[Excerpts] Three Bangladesh gunboats entered Indian territorial waters earlier this week and with their guns fully manned threatened Indian personnel at the New Moore Island and the survey ship surveying the island. India moved up one patrol craft to go to the assistance of the unarmed survey ship and to ensure that the survey work is carried on normally.

[Delhi Domestic Service in English at 1230 GMT on 16 May adds that "According to informed sources in New Delhi, the gunboats moved toward Indian personnel in a (?militant) manner with the (?gunmen). Similar provocative action was repeated on Wednesday and Thursday, leaving India no option but to move up one patrol craft to go to the assistance of the unarmed survey ship."]

Bangladesh High Commissioner in New Delhi Abdul Ahsan, who called on Foreign Secretary R.D. Sathe, was told that such activities can have a negative impact on relations between the two countries. Mr Ahsan reiterated Bangladesh's claim to the New Moore Island. New Delhi sources expressed surprise at it, because in terms of history, the rules governing coastal islands and the maritime boundary, the island falls completely within Indian territory.

The foreign secretary is believed to have told the high commissioner that the sort of campaign built up by in Bangladesh and this week's incidents seem to be entirely for extraneous reasons totally unrelated to any aspect of India-Bangladesh relations. To provoke such an incident when the two countries are exchanging data on the island appears to be motivated only by domestic political considerations. In fact, the survey ship was engaged in updating the data already available. The data had been asked for by Bangladesh itself.

India has repeatedly assured Bangladesh that it has no desire whatsoever of getting involved in its affairs. But despite that, the Bangladesh media has been blaming India on a number of scores and painting it in dark hues. The sources in Delhi view this as a sustained attempt by the Government of Bangladesh to introduce tension and misunderstanding in bilateral relations. [Delhi Domestic Service in English at 1230 GMT adds that "The All-India Radio correspondent says that besides the press campaign, Bangladesh ministers have been making similar anti-Indian statements. These trends manifested themselves soon after Mrs Hasina Wazed Sheikh was elected chairman of the Awami League. Obviously, the campaign and the incidents on the ground have been timed to coincide with her return to Dacca tomorrow."]

GANDHI, REDDY WELCOME PDY'S 'ALI NASIR MUHAMMAD

BK180758 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 18 May 81

[Text] South Yemeni President 'Ali Nasir Muhammad was warmly welcomed when he arrived in New Delhi this morning on a 5-day state visit. Muhammad was received by President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy and Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi. He was given a 21-gun salute as he stepped out of the aircraft and was presented a guard of honor by the men of the defense services.

In a statement to the press, the Yemeni president said that he would discuss with the Indian leaders bilateral cooperation and matters relating to peace in the Indian Ocean and the region. Muhammad said that his country appreciates India's international position, its role in the maintenance of peace, its stable position in the subcontinent and its support to the Arab cause.

Muhammad is scheduled to have talks with Mrs Gandhi later today.

MINISTER STEPHEN SAYS KERALA SITUATION SERIOUS

BK171607 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 17 May 81

[Text] Union Communications Minister Stephen has alleged that the situation in Kerala is serious and the people are living in an atmosphere of fear. Speaking to newsmen in Cochin, he charged that political murders are on the increase in the state.

ROMANIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS RECEIVED BY GANDHI

AU161948 Bucharest AGERPRES in English 1814 GMT 16 May 81

[Text] New Delhi, 16 May (AGERPRES)--Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu and Elena Ceausescu addressed India's prime minister, Indira Gandhi, a warm message of salute. Thanking for the message conveyed to her, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi addressed Nicolae Ceausescu and Elena Ceausescu wishes of good health and happiness. The exchange of messages was occasioned by the call paid on the Indian prime minister by the Romanian parliamentary delegation headed by Iosif Szasz, deputy chairman of the Grand National Assembly, now on an official visit of friendship to that country, at the invitation of the Indian Parliament.

Appreciating as very positive the evolution of the relations of friendship and collaboration between Romania and India, that in recent years have witnessed a strong development in all the fields of activity, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi highlighted the importance of the Romanian-Indian summit interviews and of the contacts of parliamentary, governmental planes and at other levels that led to the singling out of fresh possibilities of cooperation to mutual advantage. Highlighted was the particularly important role played by the deepening and diversification of the economic cooperation between Romania and India, the possibilities and the joint preoccupation for its continuous amplification.

Highlighted were the contribution made by Nicolae Ceausescu, the Romanian initiatives aimed at the promotion of a policy of national independence and sovereignty, at solving, with the participation and to the interest of all the nations, of the contemporary world major problems, and the sides reasserted the two countries' resolve to take action together with other states for the materialization of the ideals after peace, progress and prosperity of the nations. The sides noted with satisfaction the good collaboration between Romania and India within the UN, the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement and other international forums, expressing the two countries' joint will to further strengthen their collaboration on an international plane.

BRIEFS

TELECOMMUNICATIONS MODERNIZATION--In Trivandrum, Union Communications Minister C.M. Stephen said that the country will go in for the electronic system in a big way to modernise the telecommunication network. Global tenders have been called for to acquire 10 lakh electronic lines, he added. Of these, about 60,000 lines are expected to be available by the end of the sixth plan. [Text] [Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 1441 GMT 16 May 81 BK]

ACCORD WITH MONGOLIA--India and Mongolia signed a new 3-year cultural exchange program in New Delhi today. It envisages collaboration between institutions of higher learning of the two countries, particularly in the fields of agriculture research and indigenous medicine. It also provides for the exchange of cultural troupes and exhibitions. [Text] [Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 16 May 81 BK]

RAILROAD CONTRACT WITH LIBYA--The Indian Railways have secured a contract worth \$200 billion for a railway project in Libya. Reporting this, UNITED NEWS OF INDIA says that the work is to be undertaken by the Indian Railways Construction Company, a public sector undertaking. Minister of State for Railways Jaffer Sherif left New Delhi yesterday for Libya to finalize the contract. [Text] [Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 18 May 81 BK]

SPOKESMAN DENIES TROOPS CONCENTRATING AT INDIAN BORDER

BK160814 Karachi Overseas Service in Urdu 0800 GMT 16 May 81

[Text] An official spokesman in Islamabad has categorically stated that there is no truth behind the allegation by the Chief Minister of Gujarat Province of India that Pakistani forces are concentrating at the Indian border in Kutch. The Gujarat chief minister's statement has been broadcast by Moscow and Kabul radios. The spokesman said the situation on the Indian-Pakistan border was normal and expressed regrets that some interest-seeking quarters were intentionally spreading such baseless rumors.

AFGHANISTAN ASKED TO EXTRADITE PIA HIJACKERS

BK181040 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1005 GMT 18 May 81

[Text] Pakistan has formally presented a demand to the Kabul authorities to handover immediately and unconditionally to the Government of Pakistan the hijackers of the Pakistan International Airlines plane presently harbored in Afghanistan. This demand has been made under the provision of current international law as embodied in the Tokyo Convention of 1963, The Hague Convention of 1970 and the Montreal Convention of 1971. As a signatory of these conventions, Afghanistan is under obligation either to extradite the hijackers or to prosecute them and impose severe penalties on them.

FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN ON RELATIONS WITH U.S.

BK161600 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 16 May 81

[Text] A Foreign Office spokesman in Islamabad has said that the dialogue initiated during Foreign Minister Agha Shahi's visit to Washington last month is continuing. The spokesman said today that an agreement had been reached between both countries on the principles that would serve as the basis of their new bilateral relations. Further talks would be held on economic aid and the terms for the purchase of defense equipment from the United States. The spokesman said that it was in the interest of regional and world peace and stability that Pakistan be strong enough to defend its independence and be able to play its role as a nonaligned state. Therefore, the question of Pakistan's participating in any regional military treaty or of offering bases to the United States in exchange for defense equipment does not arise.

NAVAL CHIEF LEAVES FOR CHINA VISIT 17 MAY

BK170812 Karachi Overseas Service in Urdu 0800 GMT 17 May 81

[Text] Pakistan Naval Chief Admiral Keramat Rahman Niazi left Islamabad this morning for Beijing on an official visit to the People's Republic of China at the invitation of the commander of the Chinese Navy. During his 2-week stay in China, Admiral Keramat Rahman Niazi will inspect Chinese naval ships and installations and meet high military commanders.

SPOKESMAN CONDEMNS ISRAELI ACTION IN LEBANON

BK181034 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1005 GMT 18 May 81

[Text] Commenting on the situation in Lebanon, a spokesman of the Foreign Office stated in Islamabad today that Israel was engaged at the present time in the mischievous exercise to turn the unfortunate conflict in Lebanon into a Muslim-Christian war, which it is not. He said that the Government of Pakistan strongly condemns this nefarious design of Israel and expresses its full solidarity with the Arab brethren at this juncture. The Pakistan Government fully supports the initiative of the Arab countries to the (?interest) of the Lebanon and to foil all conspiracies against its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

BANI-SADR CONGRATULATES FALLAHI ON ABADAN VICTORY

LD161945 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 16 May 81

[Text of telegram sent by President Abolhasan Bani-Sadr to General Fallahi, acting chief of the Joint Staff of the armed forces, following the Iranian victory north of Abadan--read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God. General Fallahi, acting chief of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The armed forces' victorious attack on the enemy forces north of Abadan, together with the dedication and the self-sacrifice derived from their faith, is a great event for our people and for the deprived people of the world. The fields of this war, from the beginning until today and from today until the final victory, have been and will remain a place for the manifestations of the faith and dignity of the sons of our Islamic homeland. Communicate my greetings and tributes to the commanders of the army, the commander and all personnel of Khorasan's 77th Infantry Division, the guards corps, the mobilization force, the gendarmerie, the state police and the Fedai'yan-e Eslam in that front of dignity and honor and reiterate that the people of the entire country expect the struggle to continue until the final victory. Continue with your fight, [word indistinct] the divine's [word indistinct].

[Signed] President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran Abolhasan Bani-Sadr

BANI-SADR MEETS KHOMEYNI, COMMENTS ON TALKS

LD161232 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 16 May 81

[Text] Mr Bani-Sadr, the president, was received this morning by Imam Khomeyni, the leader of the revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

At the end of the meeting, the president gave an interview to a PARS correspondent. He said: The talks today with the imam dealt with several issues, including the war and the situation behind the fronts and the imam suggested that affairs be carried out with pleasure and happiness and in a proper manner.

The commander in chief added: The combatants of the Islamic Republic of Iran today gained a very important victory during an offensive on the Abadan front. The heights from which the enemy had dominated the city were captured by the combatants of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The enemy suffered a great many losses. We hope that our subsequent actions will also be successful.

The PARS correspondent asked the president: All over the place people are crying: "Neither compromise nor peace." What is your opinion about this?

He replied: Compromise is different from peace. If the conditions we have set are met, we can no longer make excuses and pretend that we are saying something new. If our conditions are fulfilled and if we reach our objectives, it will prove that we have discussed and insisted on what was agreed on by everybody. Of course, we shall not accept anything short of it. I think we shall gain more than what we have asked for.

KHOMEYNI RECEIVES RAFSANJANI, KHAMENE'I

GF161138 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1100 GMT 16 May 81

[Text] Imam Khomeyni, leader of the revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this morning received Majlis Speaker Hashemi-Rafsanjani and his representative in the Supreme Defence Council, 'Ali Khamene'i, who conferred with his eminence on the country's various issues.

The imam also received Member of the Council of Guardians Ahmad Jannati and his eminence's representative in the reconstruction crusade, Nateq Nuri, who was accompanied by two members of the reconstruction crusade central committee.

KHOMEYNI RECEIVES NAVY COMMANDER, OTHERS 18 MAY

GF180956 Tehran International Service in Arabic 0900 GMT 18 May 81

[Text] Imam Khomeyni, leader of the nation and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this morning received the commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran's naval forces, who was accompanied by navy personnel of the Bandar-e 'Abbas fleet, Hormozgan revolution guards, officials from the navy's political-ideological department and citizens from Hormozgan Governorate.

SUPREME DEFENSE COUNCIL HOLDS SESSION 15 MAY

LD151712 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 15 May 81

[Text] The Supreme Defense Council met this evening under the chairmanship of Commander in Chief Bani-Sadr, and with Prime Minister Raja'i; Chamran; Khamene'i, the imam's representative on the Supreme Defense Council; Brigadier General Fallahi, acting chief of the Joint Staff of the Islamic Republic; and Defense Minister Fakuri.

At the meeting the situation on the warfronts was discussed as was a draft proposal submitted by the Bangladesh president to our president during his recent visit to Iran.

Bani-Sadr Interviewed

LD152144 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 15 May 81

[Interview with President Abolhasan Bani-Sadr after a meeting of the Supreme Defense Council on 15 May; place not given--recorded]

[Text] [Question] Dr Bani-Sadr, could you please explain to our audience the salient points discussed this evening by the Supreme Defense Council?

[Anaser] Three topics were discussed: First, proposals made on the war; the second topic dealt with the Publicity Headquarters for the war; the third topic was concerned with the problems of the war, ways of conducting the war and supplies. As for the third point, we will say nothing about it. As for the second point, the Publicity Headquarters will be trying to establish a way to coordinate, to enable us to achieve victory in this war.

[Question] What you are saying then is that the Supreme Defense Council already has a headquarters?

[Answer] It has a Publicity Headquarters for the war. However, unlike before, the Supreme Defense Council will not act as a decision-making source. [passage indistinct] It is affiliated with the office of the commander in chief. We also discussed proposals made by the president of Bangladesh. We decided to deal with these proposals. Once the final result is available to us, we will make it public. Considering that these proposals are not final, we could not comply with them, for it is not clear what they are trying to say. First, the ambiguities will have to be clarified, so that the public will be able to make a decision or pass judgment on them.

[Question] Is Iran's position the same as already announced?

[Answer] Yes, it is the same. He presented our conditions, if these conditions are met, so much the better; otherwise, the war will continue.

[Question] You received Colonel [name indistinct]. Could you please comment on the meeting?

[Answer] He reported on his operations and asked us to make certain decisions, which we did.

[Question] What about the situation on the battlefronts? Is it satisfactory?

[Answer] Yes, quite satisfactory.

Publicity Headquarters Renamed

LD160842 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 16 May 81

[Statement issued by the War Publicity Staff of the Supreme Defense Council on 15 May]

[Text] In His exalted name. As the law now prohibits the Publicity Headquarters of the Supreme Defense Council from operating under its former name and because it is necessary to continue the coordination of publicity and the transmission of news in connection with the war, the 15 May session of the Supreme Defense Council decided that the council's Publicity Headquarters will henceforth be known as the War Publicity Staff [Setad-e Tablighat Jang]. It will be charged with the same tasks and given the same responsibilities as in the past and will continue its liaison work with the office of the commander in chief of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In the present circumstances, when the awareness of the heroic Muslim people of Iran of the realities of war is of vital importance and when the coordination of information and publicity connected with the war could play a fundamental role toward achieving final victory, the War Publicity Staff calls on all the mass media, institutions and civil and military organizations to give their utmost cooperation to this staff.

All information, news and issues connected with the war must be coordinated exclusively through this staff.

[Signed] The War Publicity Staff

RAJA'I CHAIRS 17 MAY DEFENSE COUNCIL SESSION

LD171801 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 17 May 81

[Text] According to a Central News Bureau report, the Supreme Defense Council of the country held a session this afternoon in the prime minister's office under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Raja'i. Participating were Colonel Fakuri, minister of defense; Mr Mahdavi-Kani, minister of interior; Colonel Foruzan, commander of the Gendarmerie of the Islamic Republic; Colonel Dastgerdi, head of the police; Mr Morteza Reza'i, commander of the guards corps; and the acting commander of the ground forces. In this meeting, which lasted over 3 hours, the security problems of the country were discussed and investigated.

RAJA'I BRIEFS CABINET ON POLITICAL, WAR ISSUES

GF161155 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1100 GMT 16 May 81

[Text] The Cabinet held a meeting this morning under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Mohammad 'Ali Raja'i.

During the session, Raja'i acquainted the Cabinet with the country's political issues and issues pertaining to the war Iraq has imposed on Iran. He also informed them of the proposals of the Islamic good offices committee that was assigned by the At-Ta'if Islamic conference as well as the Supreme Defense Council's views on these proposals.

BANI-SADR MEETS 3-MAN COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE

LD151446 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 15 May 81

[Text] PARS reports that Hojjat ol-Eslam Eshraqi met and conferred with President Bani-Sadr this morning. During this meeting they discussed and exchanged views on the country's current affairs and issues related to the three-man mediation committee.

MONTAZERI INTERVIEWED ON INQUIRY INTO TORTURE

LD171755 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 17 May 81

[Text] This morning the state prosecutor general, Mr Musavi Ardabili, and the members of the commission investigating rumors of torture were received in audience by the imam of the people. They held talks with his eminence and gave him a complete report on the results obtained in the investigations into the rumors of torture.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the state prosecutor general told the PARS correspondent that the imam of the people was satisfied with the reports on the investigations into torture which were submitted to him and that he expressed satisfaction with the commission's efficiency. He went on to say: The imam emphasized that this report, which includes the commission's activities in Tehran, must be brought to the people's attention and must also be extensively publicized outside the country.

Mr Mohammad Montazeri, the imam's representative on the commission investigating the rumors of torture, gave an interview to the Central News Bureau correspondent and answered the following questions:

[Begin recording] [Question] Today you and the members of the commission investigating the rumors of torture were received in audience by the imam. Could you tell us what issues were discussed in the imam's presence and what was the result of your visits to prisons to investigate the rumors about torture?

[Answer] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. With Ayatollah Musavi Ardabili, the state prosecutor general, we were received in audience by the imam. We submitted to his eminence a report signed by myself, Mr Dadgar, the Tehran prosecutor; Mr 'Ali Akbar 'Abedi, the Tehran public prosecutor; Mr 'Ali Mohammad Besharati, the Islamic Consultative Assembly's representative on the commission investigating the rumors of torture; and Dr Eftekhar-Jahromi, the Council of Guardians' representative on the commission. We briefly explained the progress of our activities.

On the whole, the conclusion we reached is that the system governing prisons, interrogations and the public prosecutors' offices in Iran is not based on torture, but is based on the absence of torture. Of course, we observed exceptions, in particular cases which we followed and studied; we reported these issues to the imam. We carefully visited various jails in Tehran and contacted the prisoners. We informed many, in fact all, of the Iranian prisons of the matter and all of the prisoners could write anything they wished to the commission. Relatively speaking, we have carried out a very good investigation; in other words, we devoted plenty of time to this issue. Through radio and television interviews and the mass media we shall bring the details of the investigation to the people of Iran in the near future.

[Question] The Ministry of Justice has recently received letters from some prisoners in connection with torture. Have you investigated that matter as well?

[Answer] In general, we receive these complaints; we have studied all of them. Some of them are repetitive and there is a series of various political channels through which repetitive issues are raised. These repetitive issues are meant to create an atmosphere of tension to question the very principle of the Islamic Republic regime. As I mentioned earlier, our general system not only is not based on torture, but it avoids torture. Of course, there are and will be exceptions in any organ.

[Question indistinct]

[Answer] On the whole, we have seen a series of prisoners about whom no decisions have been made. Some of them have been arrested because of their connections with other people who have not been arrested yet. There are some others who have been completely investigated but, since the judicial cadre is not as perfect as it should be, it is natural that it will take some time before decisions are made on these prisoners. We have reported cases such as these to the authorities so that they can make decisions on these cases.

[Question] Thank you. [end recording]

At the meeting the members of the commission investigating the rumors of torture had with the imam today, Messrs 'Ali Mohammad Besharati, an Islamic Consultative Assembly deputy; Dadgar, the Tehran prosecutor; and 'Ali Akbar 'Abedi, the Tehran public prosecutor, were also present.

MONTAZERI URGES CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL

LD151452 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 15 May 81

[Text] As in past weeks, the monotheistic and revolutionary citizens of Qom have attended the great Friday congregational prayers in their dense ranks and have demonstrated their monolithic unity more than ever before.

According to a Central News Bureau report, during today's prayers in Qom, held under the imamate of Ayatollah Montazeri in the city's Hakim Nezami secondary school, Mr Musavi Ardabili, the country's prosecutor general, in a speech about the realm's current issues and the upsurge of counterrevolutionary and superpower propaganda within the country, said: We feel sorry for those people who, putting aside endeavor and unity to meet the shortcomings of this revolution, come along and hatch plots and set up multifarious fronts within the country.

Ayatollah Montazeri then began reading the prayer sermons. After counseling people to be virtuous, he saluted God's prophet, His saint the leader, and the combatants on the various fronts, and then referred to the object of (?life), saying: The object is that we should be tested while we are at grips with our problems and tragedies. The object is not to have a good time and a life of ease so that the moment that a difficulty comes our way we raise our voices and say: What a life! It's all war, it's all shortages and it's all problems! We are being killed in this world, preparing ourselves for the hereafter.

Continuing his sermon, he said to the combatants and to the inhabitants of the war-stricken areas: You have suffered a great many losses and have lost all your capital and your dear ones. [passage indistinct]

Forget Iran and go after Israel; instead of a confrontation with Islam, dispatch your army for a confrontation with Israel and Zionism! He continued: We know that if our Islamic nation was not at war, all our forces would be ready to help Palestine, Syria and Lebanon and to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque from the hands of usurping Israel.

His Eminence Ayatollah Montazeri called on the government to meet the shortages suffered by the farmers and workers, and called on Mr Musavi Ardabili to expedite investigations into the position of prisoners and those accused who have not yet been tried. Toward this end he called on seminarists and scholars to assist the judicial machine.

In conclusion, Ayatollah Montazeri referred to rumors circulating, which quote him, about his son, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Montazeri, as being without foundation, saying: He is one of those people who languished in prison right from the start; he suffered a great deal of torture and also exile and has always thought and continues to think of the revolution.

Nevertheless, he also reminded the people that he would not take responsibility for his son's words and deeds.

KHAMENE'I: IRAQI SUPPORT FOR SYRIA 'EXCUSE'

LD151426 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 15 May 81

[Excerpts] The unifying and glorious rites of Tehran's Friday prayers were held today, attended by masses of God-loving and pious people of the city and led by Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i at the eternal meeting place of the true followers of God's prophets, Tehran University.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Khamene' i began the Friday prayer sermons. He said: There is a biased hand, backed by superpowers' plots, which is opposing Islam's precepts personified in the imam's policy.

[Begin Khamene'i recording] The idea that we might forget Islamic precepts is totally traitorous; this view is also expressed in our political stance. We have always declared--all the country's officials have declared--that we will not accept the aggression of Iraq's regime; I do not accept imposed solutions. Of course, I will not reject peace and fair solutions. This is our basic position.

Today the gigantic network of Zionist and global propaganda has embarked on creating an impression to the effect that the pride and arrogance of the Iranian leaders are preventing them from accepting solutions. In reply to them, we say: This is not arrogance to your blind fury, this is obeying Islamic laws. [shouts of "God is great"] [Words indistinct] we will not accept an imposed peace; but we do not wish for war either. We wish for Muslim nations to live alongside each other peacefully, under the protection of the Koran. But we can under no circumstances accept aggression. [shouts of "God is great"]

Of the deceit [words indistinct] that can be seen of the corrupt leaders of (?imposed) regimes, is what the leaders of Baghdad's regime claim. They say that if Israel were to attack Syria, Iraq would fight alongside Syria. We know--and the Arab and Muslim nations know and can testify--that this is a false claim, a deception. They want to make the excuse that if the Iraqi forces were forced to flee Iranian soil, they could preserve the reputation of the imposed regime and the mercenary Iraqi Army. When did you ever fight alongside Syria against Israel? In which bloody war did you take part, when the Zionist enemy attacked Arab lands? What are you lackeys and agents doing in Lebanon now? Now that Lebanon is being subjected to the dastardly invasion by the Zionist enemy, the Iraqi agents are directly in the service of the Lebanese Phalangists and are against the combative forces who want to defend their Islamic, or Arab, honor. You have always been [word indistinct] alongside Israel and the United States and have not yet taken one step in the fight against Israel. You are lying. If Israel were to attack Syria, you would not even help Syria [words indistinct].

We declare--and the nation will endorse and stress this--that despite all our difficulties today, the war and internal problems, if the Zionist enemy were to attack Syria, our nation, our people and our government would fight alongside our Muslim brothers against the usurper Israel. [shouts of "God is great"] [end recording]

In his second sermon Hojjat ol-Eslam Khamene'i first referred to the issue of the open debate; he asked the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran to broadcast recordings of open debates as soon as possible, so that the nature of those who claim to support open debates, but who have not participated in these programs, is revealed.

HEASHEMI-RAFSANJANI DEPARTS FOR SYRIA WITH MESSAGE

LD170824 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0730 GMT 17 May 81

[Text] Mohammad Hashemi-Rafsanjani, deputy prime minister in charge of political affairs, left early this morning for Syria at the head of a delegation in order to declare the Islamic Republic's total support for Syria against the regime occupying Jerusalem. He is carrying with him a message from the prime minister for President Hafiz al-Asad.

COMMERCE OFFICIALS DISCUSS TRADE PROBLEMS

LD161816 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 16 May 81

[Text] According to a Central News Bureau report, in a meeting held this morning attended by Prime Minister Mohammad 'Ali Raja'i, Commerce Minister Kazempour Ardabili, Commerce Ministry undersecretaries and a number of steel merchants discussed issues related to Iran's foreign trade problems. The meeting was held in the Commerce Ministry.

RADIO CALLS FOR BUDGET DEBATE PARTICIPANTS

LD151742 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 15 May 81

[Statement issued by the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic on a proposed television debate on the budget--date not given]

[Text] In His exalted name. In view of the fact that the current budget has become a topic of debate and discussions, with different views being expressed, the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic is planning to stage free debates and thus introduce logical views. Following a request from the prime minister's office to hold a roundtable debate on the matter, this organization invites experts and economists to participate. All interested individuals should write, no later than the close of business on Sunday, 17 May, to the Public Relations Office of the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic.

MIZAN: BAZARGAN'S ENEMIES HIRED ASSASSIN

NC191007 Paris AFP in English 0718 GMT 16 May 81

[Text] Tehran, 16 May (AFP)--Enemies of Mehdi Bazargan, who headed Iran's provisional government after the Islamic revolution, attempted to hire a former soldier to assassinate him, the progressive daily MIZAN reported today.

The newspaper published what it presented as a confession by former soldier Karam Jalali, telling how he had been approached in the street by strangers on motorcycles who offered him five million rials (54,500 dollars) to carry out the killing.

He initially agreed to the offer, and even went to collect a handgrenade provided by the strangers, which he was to have thrown at Mr Bazargan in front of the newspaper's own offices, the newspaper said.

Subsequently, he backed out of the deal, judging that he risked being bilked of the blood money and even liquidated in his turn.

The former soldier was today being held for questioning after police discovered a handgrenade in his home.

ARMED FORCES JOINT STAFF COMMUNIQUE 503-505

503: Battles, Naval 'Dominance'

LD151758 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 15 May 81

[Communique 503 of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. Reports on the battlefronts in the past 24 hours are brought to the attention of the revolutionary and combative people of Iran:

On the Marivan fronts, Iraqi positions came under artillery and heavy-weapon fire from the combatants of the ground forces, resulting in the destruction of five trenches and one vehicle belonging to the enemy; one enemy tank was also damaged. On the same front, enemy positions in the region of Panjwin came under fire from our forces, who are ready to give their lives; as a result, a number of 130-mm guns, 3 personnel carriers, 1 antiaircraft gun and 10 trenches belonging to the enemy were set on fire and destroyed.

On the Abadan fronts yesterday, exchanges of fire continued; as a result, about 18 Iraqi Army personnel were killed and 2 of the Iraqi forces were taken captive.

On the Abadan and Khuninshahr fronts, the devotees of the Navy of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, enjoying complete superiority and full power, maintain surveillance over and guard waterway border areas and the military zone in the Persian Gulf. Having complete dominance, they bring under control the slightest desperate movement by the enemy. Yesterday the navy combatants brought positions of the Iraqi Army's aggressive forces in the occupied zone in Khuninshahr under fire and destroyed a number of trenches and one observation post belonging to the enemy and killed or wounded a number of enemy forces.

In the past 24 hours, sporadic exchanges of fire continued on the fronts west of Dezful and the Allaho Akbar and Faryab heights. On one of the west Dezful fronts, as a result of fire from armed forces' combatants, four vehicles, one machinegun nest, one 82-mm mortar, one trench and two ammunition dumps belonging to the enemy were destroyed and one Iraqi tank was hit by our forces and put out of action.

Yesterday and last night the cities of Abadan and Ahvaz came under an enemy missile and artillery attack; losses and casualties were inflicted.

The combatants of the skies and the devotees of the air force in their offensive bombed positions and assembly points of the Iraqi Army on the Bostan and Mared fronts and on one of the west Dezful fronts, inflicting considerable losses and casualties on the enemy.

Yesterday a number of the intruding aircraft of the Iraqi Army, which intended to violate the airspace of several western and southern cities in our country, were confronted with intense air defense fire from the combatants of the forces of Islam and escaped.

[Signed] Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

504: Successes in Abadan

LD161810 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 16 May 81

[Communique 504 of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. The Islamic Republic's Army combatants, the gendarmerie, police, the revolution guards corps and the heroic people's forces are withstanding the mercenary enemy like a mountain, while prepared to sacrifice everything they possess for the sake of Islam and their Islamic homeland. We thank God Almighty for having once again favored the Muslim nation, especially the Islamic combatants, with His grace, by making them victorious over the forces of the infidels through His mysterious help.

The heroes of Khorasan's 77th Infantry Division, our brother guards and mobilization members succeeded in recapturing designated positions during a night offensive launched in the early hours of 16 May, in the area of Tir Square in Abadan. In these successful operations a great many of Saddam's misguided troops were killed, and 85 enemy soldiers were captured. As for the aggressors' logistic losses, they include eight tanks, four armoured personnel carriers and a considerable quantity of light and heavy weapons and ammunition.

Meanwhile, a number of our combatants were martyred during today's operations, and some others were wounded. The exact figures of our losses will be announced later. At present, the remnants of the enemy forces are trying to flee in this area, while our heroic forces are engaged in advancing and pursuing the aggressors.

It should also be pointed out that Abadan was never completely beleaguered by the Iraqi Army; only a small sector of it in the north was under their siege. As for this small sector, part of it was recaptured during a heroic operation in Kut-e Zolfiqari and another sector in the course of last night's operations. Attempts are continuing to liberate the remaining sector and thus all of Abadan.

The Joint Staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran congratulates the heroic victory of the army, especially Khorasan's 77th Infantry Division and the brothers in the revolution guards corps and mobilization as well as the gendarmerie and Fedai'yan-e Eslam, while expressing its boundless greetings to the souls of the martyrs of these operations.

As for other fronts, some successful results were achieved by our forces during the past 24 hours. In this connection, mention should be made of operations in Hamidiyeh, where, following artillery shelling by our ground forces, four tanks, one vehicle, one heavy machinegun, one munition depot, five artillery emplacements and a number of foxholes and bunkers were destroyed. Exchange of fire also continued on various fronts in Ahvaz, where our forces destroyed one tank, several vehicles and a certain quantity of weapons as well as ammunition belonging to the mercenaries. In Dezful, our forces inflicted considerable losses on the enemy by shelling his trucks. During this same period Saddam's impotent army brought residential areas in Dezful and Abadan under fire several times.

In Khuninshahr, the Islamic Republic's naval units shelled an enemy boat. The boat had no crew. At one of the Susangerd fronts, the enemy was forced to retreat after a confrontation with our forces, leaving behind 10 dead and a number of wounded. In these operations, 75 Kalashnikov rifles were captured by our forces.

As for the western part of the country, sporadic exchanges of artillery fire continued, while in Meymak and Kan-e Sakht firing has continued more intensively. In the (Dehlid) area, an enemy mortar launcher and a bunker were destroyed by our artillery fire, with a number of enemy forces being killed or wounded. In this same area, three Iraqi soldiers sought asylum, seeking refuge among our forces.

505: Successes on Various Fronts

LD171814 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 17 May 81

[Communique 505 of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] The situation on the battlefronts over the last 24 hours is hereby brought to the attention of the militant Muslim compatriots as follows:

The self-sacrificing units of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Abadan and Khuninshahr fronts opened fire on the aggressive enemy positions and destroyed two ammunition tents, one Katyusha missile pad, two vehicles carrying ammunition and several enemy foxholes and trenches, and killed or wounded a number of Saddam's mercenaries. On the Abadan-Mahshahr front, Islam's self-sacrificing heroes also succeeded in setting ablaze and destroying two machinegun emplacements, one ammunition dump, one Katyusha missile pad, one tank and one enemy bulldozer. They also succeeded in killing a number of enemy personnel.

The enemy continued to direct its fire on residential areas in Abadan to cause some damage. In the Dezful region, Islam's combatants opened fire on the Iraqi aggressors' positions and, while preventing the enemy from making any movement or engaging in activity, destroyed one Iraqi tank and one vehicle, killing eight enemy troops and wounding several others. Our mighty warriors in Hamidiyeh and Ahvaz also destroyed one enemy tank and one loader, killing or wounding a number of enemy forces.

Exchanges of fire continued on the western fronts and the Islamic forces on the Konjamcham and Kan-e Sakht front, at Meymak and Bazi Deraz, brought enemy positions under fire and inflicted losses and casualties on the Iraqi Army. The artillery of the Ground Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran also shelled Iraqi positions in the (Asun) region and caused the enemy substantial material and personnel losses.

The self-sacrificing warriors of the air defense units yesterday forced a number of enemy aircraft that had intruded into the airspace of some of our country's western and southern cities to flee. On 13, 14 and 15 May, 28 of our brothers in the Ground Forces, 4 from the Navy and one member of the Gendarmerie of the Islamic Republic of Iran achieved the lofty status of martyrdom on the fronts of truth against falsehood. May their souls be happy.

[Signed] The Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

GUARDS CORPS COMMUNIQUE ON FIGHTING IN SOUTH, WEST

LD160622 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 15 May 81

[Communique issued on 15 May by the Public Relations Office of the Command Council of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps on 13-14 May operations]

[Text] A. Western fronts:

1. With the cooperation of the revolution guards devotees and the heroes of the army and the gendarmerie, the village of Takht in the vicinity of Saqqez, which was under the control of counterrevolutionary forces and mercenaries, has been mopped up. The counterrevolutionary assailants, having suffered losses and casualties, fled. During these operations, our brothers managed to capture some weapons and ammunition delonging to Saddam's aggressive army from the mopped-up bases.

2. The self-sacrificing revolution guards in the region of Gilan-e Gharb, by planting mines, managed to destroy one supply tent and one vehicle belonging to the forces of blasphemy, together with its occupants.

3. On the Tang-e Hajiyan front, following an attack by a group of Saddam's forces, brother guards managed to kill or wound a number of Ba'thist mercenaries.

B. Southern fronts:

1. Abadan: The guards corps' mortar unit managed to destroy one ammunition dump belonging to the aggressive Ba'thists at Abadan's Station No 7. On the Fayyaziye front one ammunition dump was destroyed and three of Saddam's mercenaries were killed. Also, the mortar fire of the Islamic revolution guards on the jetty and oil installation of Al-Faw inflicted losses and casualties on the Saddamites.

2. Ahvaz: Following an attack by a number of personnel of Battalion No 3 of Saddam's special forces on the banks of the Karkheh Kur River, our combatants, with their heroic response, managed to inflict losses and casualties on the forces of blasphemy and to take captive an NCO of Saddam's army.

3. The occupied zone in Khuninshahr: On the Kut Sheykh front, brother guards completely destroyed one ammunition dump and one assembly base of the Ba'thist troops.

4. The mortar unit of the guards corps on the Mahaz front managed to destroy one vehicle carrying ammunition and to demolish parts of an assembly base of Saddam's aggressive forces.

[Signed] The Public Relations Office of the Command Council of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps

NVOI: OFFICIALS VIOLATING YEAR OF LAW GUIDELINES

TA151936 [Editorial Report] The clandestine National Voice of Iran in Persian to Iran at 1730 GMT on 15 May carried a commentary, entitled "The Year of the Authority of the Law," which said that Imam Khomeyni has named the year 1360 [21 March 1981-21 March 1982] as the year of the authority of the law. The fulfillment of this important matter and the demand of the imam is one of the important duties of all followers of the popular and anti-imperialist revolution of 11 February, especially officials of the Islamic Republic. Unfortunately, blind fanaticism, superficiality, monopoly seeking and self-centrism have up to now and in many cases been serious obstacles on the path of implementing the Constitution and promoting the aims of the imam's popular and anti-imperialist line. One should mention here the principle of the freedom of political beliefs which in many cases is being violated by this or that official or by fanatical and superficial groups, and this in conditions where Imam Khomeyni and many officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran as well have repeatedly recommended the precise and full implementation of this principle.

As we are aware, the imam of the nation has consistently attached great importance to the authority of the law and to the principle of the freedom of political beliefs, and has recognized and continues to recognize this principle as a prerequisite for developing and deepening the popular and anti-imperialist revolution of 11 February. However, the monopoly seekers and the self-centrists and the officials who are caught up in superficiality and blind fanaticism ignored the law from the very outset and continue to ignore it. Despite the repeated reminders of Imam Khomeyni and the committed officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran in connection with observing and respecting the principle of the freedom of political beliefs, we are witnessing the law breaking and monopoly seeking of some officials even in the year of the authority of the law. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran explicitly forbids the investigation of beliefs, and states that no one can be assaulted and reprimanded merely because that person possesses a certain belief. However, despite the clear and explicit guidelines of the imam and other committed officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the violation of this important principle of the Constitution is continuing in certain cases up to this very day and in the year of the authority of the law as well, particularly against the true forces of the revolution and members of parties and organizations committed to the revolution. An end must be put to this situation forever.

NEPALFORMER PRIME MINISTER ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT

BK171525 Hong Kong AFP in English 0740 GMT 17 May 81

[Report by Kedar Man Singh]

[Text] Katmandu, 17 May (AFP)--The former prime minister, Dr. K.I. Singh, 70, who had staged an abortive coup in the early 1950's and popularly known as Robin Hood of Nepal, has been elected from his home town constituency Rupendehi with a fair margin of votes, it was officially announced this morning.

The victory of Dr Singh is a grave threat to caretaker Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa in the forthcoming election of the prime ministership, due to take place some time in early June.

The other politically significant candidates who were declared victorious were Pashupati Rana, 42, from Sindhuli District, 150 kilometres east of Katmandu, and Gopal Chandra Rajbansi, from Jhapa, 280 kilometres southeast of Katmandu bordering Naxalbari.

Both Rana and Rajbansi are the strong critics of Prime Minister Thapa, and these people are likely to play a strong opposition role in the house, keeping Dr Singh on the forefront.

With the results of elections in 69 out of the total 75 districts in which 102 members of the total 112 members were declared elected so far, more than 70 percent of Prime Minister Thapa-supported people have been defeated and new faces have replaced them. Among them, at least 10 are believed to be strong followers of the Marxist faction.

Among those defeated who were prominently talked about in the Nepalese political circles are Rajeswore Devkota, the former chairman of the national Panchayat--a viable candidate for the prime ministerial post (if he had been elected) Hari Bahadur Basnyet; Narendra Kumar Pradhan, both believed to be pro-Soviet Panchayat leaders; Forest Minister Makeswar Prashad Singh and Rabindra Nath Sharma, former minister for law and justice.

From among the approximately 60 candidates backed by the pro-Soviet outlawed Nepal Communist Party, hardly a couple of them were victorious, but the separated group of the outlawed Nepali Congress, headed by Bakhan Singh Gurung, has captured about four seats so far. The important among them are Bakhan Singh Gurung, former Health Minister Kashi Nath Gautam, who had served 18 months in B.P. Koirala's first elected government, dissolved in December 1960, and Arjun Narshing K.C., a lecturer of Tribhuvan University.

Also significant is the victory of Main Bahadur Swarn, the sitting minister for law and justice, food and agriculture; Lokendra Bahadur Chand, the sitting chairman of the national Panchayat from Baitadi, the far northwest Nepal district. Except two sitting ministers, all those who contested in the election have won it.

The new house is expected to open in the next two weeks in order to elect the new prime minister. However, 28 persons (25 percent of the 112 members) will be nominated by the king from among the distinguished educationists, top brass of the Panchayat leaders, social servicemen from different communities, including the scheduled and backward classes, before the opening of the new house.

According to the new constitution, to be a viable candidate for the prime ministerial post, one should get the recommendation of the least 25 percent of the total 140 members of the unicameral legislature (including the king's nominees).

The final hurdle, however, would be to acquire at least 60 percent of the votes of the total strength of the house before his or her name is forwarded to Western-educated King Birendra, 36, for his consent to the post of prime ministership. Immediately after the announcement of the result of the prime ministerial candidate, the present caretaker government of Mr Thapa will be dissolved automatically.

Forest Minister Resigns

BK171513 Katmandu External Service in English 1450 GMT 17 May 81

[Text] His majesty the king has accepted the resignation tendered by Forest Minister Makeswar Prashad Singh through the prime minister on the ground that he failed to get elected to the Rashtriya Panchayat. His majesty the king had thanked the minister for honestly discharging his duties while in office. This was stated in a notice issued in Katmandu today by the principal press secretariat of his majesty the king.

SRI LANKA

PREMADESA RETURNS FROM TOUR OF ASEAN COUNTRIES

BK171121 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 17 May 81

[Excerpt] Prime Minister Premadasa returned home yesterday evening from his four-nation Southeast Asian tour. In a statement at Colombo airport Katanayake, where there was a large crowd to welcome him, the prime minister said that he had successful talks with the leaders of the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. In all these countries, the prime minister and party were greeted as state guests by the governments and people and accorded the highest courtesy. This, Premadasa said, is a manifestation of the high regard which the governments of these countries have for President Jayewardene and the policies of the Sri Lanka Government. The prime minister said the trade matters had featured prominently in his discussions and valuable suggestions have been made to reduce Sri Lanka's trade gap with these countries. A detailed report on his talks would be submitted to the president.

The prime minister said that the leaders of the four countries he visited had said they fully endorsed Sri Lanka's present policies and had offered their fullest cooperation with the government.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 0642 GMT on 17 May adds that Premadasa "confirmed that he had told the leaders of these countries that Sri Lanka would be willing to join the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) if invited." The AFP report goes on note: "In a statement at the airport on his return, Mr Premadasa said that all the four countries he visited, which are members of ASEAN, 'display an impressively high level of economic development with annual growth rates well above average and low unemployment figures.' Mr. Premadasa said that in the area of foreign affairs too there is an acceptance of 'Pancasila' and the Bandung principles by the ASEAN countries. 'ASEAN itself is not a military grouping and has steered clear of military entanglements. Its distinctive feature has been a single-minded devotion to co-operative action for socioeconomic development,' he said. The prime minister said that since Sri Lanka shares broadly similar goals and objectives with ASEAN countries both in its internal and external policies, he had in accordance with the government's position on these matters taken the opportunity to inform the leaders of the countries he had visited that 'if invited, Sri Lanka would be willing to participate in the activities of regional co-operation, which constitute the substance of ASEAN, to Sri Lanka's mutual interests and advantage.' Mr. Premadasa said that the leaders of all the four nations were very appreciative of Sri Lanka's policy and stand on Afghanistan and Kampuchea. He said Sri Lanka fully supports the United Nations resolutions on Afghanistan and Kampuchea calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops and the right of self-determination. In the case of Kampuchea, Sri Lanka stands for the early convening of an international conference to find a political solution to the issue, he said. Mr. Premadasa said that Sri Lanka's position on these issues was 'warmly commended' by the leaders of all the four nations he visited."]